

DPH Announces Two Naloxone Training, Distribution Events in New Castle County

NEW CASTLE (March 28, 2019) – As part of its Community Naloxone Distribution initiative, the Division of Public Health (DPH) will hold two additional community naloxone distribution events in New Castle County next week. This initiative is part of a multi-pronged approach to address the opioid crisis and reduce the number of individuals dying from drug overdoses in Delaware.

In conjunction with National Public Health Week (April 1 through 7, 2019), DPH will distribute free naloxone kits to members of the general public during the following times:

- Wednesday, April 3, 2019, 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.,
Springer Building Gymnasium, DHSS Herman Holloway Campus
1901 N. Dupont Highway, New Castle, DE 19720
- Saturday, April 6, 2019, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Porter State Service Center 509 West 8th St., Wilmington,
DE 19801

Individuals are encouraged to stop by at any time during either event. Training takes approximately 15 minutes. Each naloxone kit will contain two doses of naloxone, and members of the community who attend these events will receive one-on-one training on how to administer the overdose-reversing medication.

“This training is so important that we wanted to have an event on our main campus that would be open not only to the public, but to state employees as well,” said Dr. Kara Odom Walker, Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). “We all can play a role in reducing harm among people suffering from substance use disorder and,

potentially, in saving a life. I urge people to stop by either event to get trained on how to use naloxone.” Secretary Walker, a board-certified family physician, will do the training at the Holloway Campus event and receive a naloxone kit.

The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) also will have representatives on hand to answer any questions about access to treatment for those struggling with substance use disorder.

About 80 percent of all overdoses happen in a private residence – whether it’s the home of the person who overdosed or someone else’s – which is why DPH is encouraging friends, family members, and those struggling with opioid addiction to have naloxone on hand. If family or friends of someone overdosing have naloxone immediately accessible, it can mean the difference between life or death for that person.

Within three to five minutes after administration, naloxone can counteract the life-threatening respiratory depression of an opioid-related overdose and stabilize a person’s breathing, which buys time for emergency medical help to arrive. DPH recommends calling 9-1-1 immediately if you find someone in the midst of a suspected overdose, starting rescue breathing, and then administering naloxone. Naloxone is not a replacement for emergency medical care and seeking immediate help and follow-up care is still vital.

Preliminary estimates for 2018 indicate 419 overdose deaths across the state, an increase of 21 percent from the 2017 total of 345 deaths, according to the Division of Forensic Science. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranked Delaware number six in the nation for overdose mortality rate in 2017.

In 2018, first responders administered 3,728 doses of naloxone, compared to 2,861 in 2017, a 30 percent increase.

Funding for the Community Naloxone Distribution Initiative comes from state funding built into DPH's budget for the first time in state fiscal year 2019, thanks to the advocacy of Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long and the Behavioral Health Consortium. In October, DPH also announced the agency was awarded federal funds to support the purchase of naloxone and other programs for first responders.

Community access to naloxone has increased significantly since 2014 when legislation was enacted making it available to the public. In 2017, Governor John Carney signed additional legislation ensuring pharmacists had the same legal protections as doctors, peace officers and good Samaritans when dispensing the medicine without a prescription.

Information on community training and pharmacy access to naloxone, along with resources regarding prevention, treatment and recovery are available at <https://www.helpisherede.com/Get-Help/Overdose-Prevention>.